

## JAZZ REVIEW

## Soaking Up the Spaces at a New Jazz Center

By BEN RATLIFF

Some basic impressions of Jazz at Lincoln Center's new space, which opened last night: It is a sophisticated, cosmopolitan, fairly expensive-feeling experience; it is flexible and alive.

Jazz has so many different connotations for different people. But at least some part of this three-theater complex, taking up the fifth and sixth floors of the Time Warner Center on Columbus Circle, could ring the bells of recognition of someone who had never been to a jazz performance before and only possessed the received wisdom of photographs and album covers: yes, this seems right; this is jazz. And it contains enough attention to detail to impress those who have spent the better part of their lives hearing it, too.

Last night's invitation-only opening shows, broadcast live on PBS, are not going to remain in the imagination as any kind of normal night: it was an evening for board members, donors, critics, musicians and those involved with the construction of the hall. And so it is too early to tell what it will feel like as the theaters begin their season-long schedule, with the bigger concerts in the 1,200-seat Rose Theater and the 550-seat Allen Room overlapping with shows in the 140-seat Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola.

The Rose Theater, especially, was hard to get a grip on in a first encounter. It was set up as a theater-in-the-

round, which won't always be the case, and for the sake of television, the ceiling lights were torching the house. And there's no way that all the different configurations of music, with guests coming and going for every song (among them Abbey Lincoln, Tony Bennett, Mark O'Connor, Giovanni Hidalgo, Cyro Baptista and Wynton Marsalis's musical family) could have been sound-checked to their best advantage. The music it-

*Three theaters reflect the music's great endurance, and raise the stakes.*

self worked as a statement of purpose: a version of the organization's desired eclecticism in miniature, with a blues, a New Orleans tune ("Dippermouth Blues"), an orchestration of forró music from Northeastern Brazil, ballads, Coltrane, Basie and so on.

But at certain moments — as when the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra suddenly cut away from the tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano, who played a few unaccompanied bars during his solo in "Body and Soul" — you could hear some of the richness we

have in store. His saxophone sound had tremendous depth and resonance, a more intimate sound than we have become used to at Avery Fisher Hall and Alice Tully Hall, where Jazz at Lincoln Center's concerts were held since the mid-1980's.

For the basic potential of hearing jazz in a theater, it might not get much better than the Allen Room. The Lincoln Center Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, eighteen musicians on an oval bandstand, set up there for three sets, through more than three hours of music, and they played their repertory, from Machito to new works like Tom Harrell's "Humility." The room is exceptionally well-balanced. With only light amplification (and the idea is that some performances in the future will have none), the music was detailed. Pablo Calogero's baritone saxophone came through as well as Milton Cardona's conga drums. And the high windows overlooking Central Park South give another staggering dimension: toward the top of the glass, you see the reflection of car headlights playing on the windows.

From the smaller windows behind the bandstand at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, you see half Trump International Hotel and Tower, half Central Park treetops. Bill Charlap played three sets there, a small space with a variety of guests sitting in, including Wynton Marsalis, who played whinies and melodic inventions through "Just Friends," in front of Clark Ter-



Sara Krulwich/The New York Times

Wynton Marsalis led a New Orleans-style parade on Broadway yesterday from Lincoln Center to the new home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, Frederick P. Rose Hall in the Time Warner Center on Columbus Circle.

ry, stopping by to check out the new place.

Adjustments, acoustic and otherwise, are made to nearly all theaters after they open. I've seen some clubs

proceed for years in a fairly raw or problematic state. But already these rooms impressively translate into bricks-and-mortar reality how the planners of Jazz at Lincoln Center

have raised the stakes for jazz to become visible and powerful in the city. In their thesis, jazz isn't secluded; it's right out there, exposed and imperious, peering over the street.